

---

---

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT: HOUSING ELEMENT  
HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE**

**STAFF REPORT  
JULY 14, 2011**

---

---

---

---

## Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Housing Element HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

**Staff Report  
July 14, 2011**

---

---

Plan is available for viewing at:

<http://www.tippecanoe.in.gov/egov/docs/1292943984832.htm>

The Housing Element to the Comprehensive Plan is an important document whose purpose is to educate and guide elected officials and the development community as they make decisions that impact housing in our community. The first comprehensive planning process begun in 1976 used a public participation program called "Plan It" to gather community input and generate a set of goals and objectives. These goals shaped the document that would ultimately become the Comprehensive Plan of Tippecanoe County, first adopted by the Area Plan Commission in September, 1981.

Beginning in 2003 a group of stakeholders, made up of representatives from local not-for-profit groups and government departments and agencies with a vested interest in affordable housing and smart growth, began meeting to discuss housing needs in Tippecanoe County. In early 2004, staff met with a small workgroup of private sector housing professionals working in real estate, land appraisal, residential development, land use law and banking to gather additional input. The information gathered from both groups provided early direction toward areas of research to include in the plan update.

After an extended period of research, in 2009 and 2010 staff reassembled the stakeholders group to finish the plan and establish a new list of policy statements. After an initial hearing in March of 2011, the Area Plan Commission tasked the Ordinance Committee to complete final edits to the policy statements. In May and June of 2011 the Ordinance Committee completed these final edits to the policy statements.

Staff recommends adoption of this amendment to replace the Comprehensive Plan's existing 1981 Housing Element.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

## **Policy Statements**

The following policy statements are put forth and adopted by the Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County and its six participating jurisdictions in order to further the objectives of providing sufficient housing to meet the needs of all current and future residents while minimizing construction costs and maximizing compatibility with the natural and built environments. Some of these statements are being carried forward from the original plan as they remain relevant. The remaining statements reflect the work of the stakeholder/work group assembled to update this housing element.

### **Revised Policy Statements Carried Forward:**

1. The Area Plan Commission and its participating jurisdictions are to continue efforts to streamline and coordinate review processes involved in the development of residential properties, and to ensure the uniform enforcement of all regulations pertaining to land use and building construction, in order to reduce unnecessary delays and concomitant costs without sacrificing essential public safeguards.
2. The staff of the Area Plan Commission and the Community Development Departments of Lafayette and West Lafayette are to combine efforts in formulating detailed and specific neighborhood plans, policies and implementable programs.
3. Neighborhood stability is to be promoted through a program of strong, equitable code enforcement, and continuing public investment in the maintenance of public facilities and services. Neighborhood associations and property owner associations are to be encouraged and permitted active participation in decision-making activities. Lending institutions are to be encouraged to provide neighborhood residents with a sufficient supply of home improvement financing. The feasibility of tax deferral or abatement programs designed to encourage housing rehabilitation is to be explored. Any infill construction is to mirror the existing physical character of the neighborhood.
4. Residential areas requiring major intervention, including the development of underutilized sites and the redevelopment of significantly deteriorating segments of neighborhoods, are to be carefully selected, and sensitively planned and developed, in order to minimize disruption and maximize compatibility with historic neighborhood patterns. Developers are encouraged to use the Planned Development process, especially in historic neighborhoods.
5. In relation to established needs multi-family development should be encouraged on lands located near major activity centers.
6. Federal and state agencies providing housing construction loans and rental assistance programs are to be encouraged to be responsive to local housing needs in an effort to provide balanced and stable assistance to local residents and home builders.
7. Within a context of providing sufficient and appropriate housing to all segments of the county, special attention is to be given to meeting the housing needs of our community's lowest income families, the disabled and the elderly poor. In keeping with established Federal policy, scattered-site construction, infilling and mixed-

income development are to be encouraged to prevent economic segregation within the community.

8. To further foster availability and affordability of housing in a changing economy, the local development community is to be encouraged to utilize available procedures to build new types of housing specifically designed to meet the needs of smaller households, save land costs and reduce required infrastructure, while providing sufficient living space and maintaining residential privacy.

#### **New Policy Statements:**

9. Promote greater sustainability by supporting initiatives including: the protection of prime farm land and natural areas; promotion of energy efficiency and expansion of renewable energy solutions; reduction of stormwater runoff; water conservation and sewer planning; providing green spaces in established and newly planned neighborhoods and commercial spaces; development of a community-wide complete streets policy; ensuring orderly planning and regulation of new housing units in subdivisions; reduction of waste to landfills during construction and operation; and continue infrastructure and aesthetic improvements in older areas.
10. Support fiscally responsible provision of public services, facilities, green space and amenities for new housing developments and upgrading these same elements in existing developments as funds become available.
11. Address the migration of families to new developments on the urban fringe in the county school district by identifying redevelopment areas suitable for families inside both West Lafayette and Lafayette school districts.
12. On a continual basis, APC staff will: gather accurate information on inventory, sales, cost and trends in the housing market; gather information on the housing needs of low and moderate income households, including minority households; and seek data identifying trends in markets including "empty-nesters", student housing, rentals and starter homes.
13. Regard the Wabash River as a principle center of community activity and support residential and mixed-use redevelopment around the river that contributes to this concept of a community center. Encourage development of river related recreational opportunities near downtown as a means to stabilize existing neighborhoods and to attract more permanent and partial-year residents in areas within walking distance of the river.
14. Create land use plans that emphasize vibrant neighborhoods and supports growth in Downtown Lafayette, the Levee area, and West Lafayette Village areas.
15. Support the preservation of existing housing stock in our urban neighborhoods when planning new commercial and residential developments within these established areas.
16. Support homebuyer education and foreclosure prevention counseling and develop and encourage other community awareness initiatives to address housing issues

having a negative community impact including falling property values and deferred property maintenance.

17. Establish and promote incentives for the reuse of unused buildings.
18. Promote and market existing neighborhoods and their amenities. In older neighborhoods, support the preservation of historic structures and their unique architecture.
19. Support efforts to accommodate housing needs across the income spectrum, utilizing data provided by APC staff regarding price points for the jobs we have and the jobs we are attracting.
20. Using the latest Census tract data and other appropriate sources, identify all pockets of housing in most need of intervention due to issues pertaining to building condition, tenancy, vacancy rate, foreclosure rates and low to moderate income status. Establish a priority list of these properties for the purposes of targeting available resources designed to assist distressed properties.
21. In order to promote the greater safety and integrity of rental units in Tippecanoe County, identify and prioritize overcrowded rental units and target enforcement efforts accordingly.
22. To address the gap between the median price of new and existing homes, focus available resources on the promotion and targeted redevelopment of established neighborhoods.
23. Significant new residential construction, regardless of density and configuration, is to be constructed only in the presence of, or in conjunction with, sufficient levels of public services, facilities, and all modes of transportation.
24. Housing specifically intended to serve low and moderate income and student populations is to be built within reasonable proximity to major shopping facilities and established public transportation routes.
25. Investigate the use of impact fees to balance cost of growth between new and existing residential areas.
26. Target rehabilitation assistance which improves accessibility for households of the disabled and elderly.
27. Zoning and land use decisions regarding housing development and redevelopment shall be guided, in part, by adopted neighborhood plans. A neighborhood plan found to be outdated relative to the neighborhood's current situation shall be updated as APC staff resources allow. In developing neighborhood plans, staff shall encourage the active participation of neighborhood associations with all other property owners and residents. Continued development of neighborhood associations and property owner associations is strongly encouraged.

28. Zoning and land use decisions impacting neighborhoods rich in diversity, including those near Purdue University, shall consider all competing interests and promote an improved quality of life for all neighborhood residents.
29. In areas of the community that have been identified in the Land Use Survey as having declining housing conditions, support the rehabilitation of homeowner units for households of varying family sizes, incomes, and ages.
30. Promote the development of replacement housing in the county for mobile homes that have serious substandard conditions as identified in the Land Use Survey. Encourage private sector re-development of existing mobile home communities with affordable housing in a neighborhood setting.
31. In order to encourage our aging and disabled population to remain in the community, promote universal design elements with all residential developments and rehabilitations for greater livability and flexibility for all persons regardless of their physical ability.